

CONFIDENTIAL.]

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REPORT (PART II)
ON
NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL
FOR THE
Week ending Saturday, 4th January 1902.

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I.—FOREIGN POLITICS.

1. The *Bengalee* has an article on the Bill introduced into the Federal Parliament for the regulation of postal and telegraphic services of the Commonwealth, and remarks that the Bill is solely directed against the Indian *lascars* who find employment on vessels carrying mails to the Australian ports. It is glad to see that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce has entered a strong protest against the threatened legislation, though it has little reason to hope that, however strongly the Government of India may support the protest, it will avail much. It remains to be seen whether the Imperial Government will rise to the occasion by withholding assent unless the objectionable provision referred to is expunged from the Bill. Mr. Chamberlain is a strong man and he will require all his strength to prevent the infliction of yet another wrong upon India.

BENGALIAN,
3rd Jan. 1902.

II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

2. The *Amrita Basar Patrika* draws the attention of Government to the unsuccessful prosecution for desertion of Johar Khan, a *chaukidar* of the Hooghly district, who left his post on his application for leave on account of serious illness and subsequent resignation of his appointment, being refused by the District Superintendent of Police.

AMRITA BASAR
PATRIKA,
2nd Jan. 1

Even the Joint-Magistrate who tried the case and acquitted the *chaukidar* was led to remark that the man should not have been prosecuted at all "for humanity's sake." But, remarks the *Patrika*, this case only shows how helpless *chaukidars* are treated by some District Superintendents of Police. It hopes that these men will receive justice and better treatment at the hands of the authorities.

The writer next complains of the action of Mr. Castle in writing to the District Magistrate to the effect that the Joint-Magistrate had acted "foolishly" by letting off the man, and that the District Magistrate "should speak to the Joint-Magistrate on the subject."

"We need hardly say," he remarks, "that the Joint-Magistrate in this instance was a 'native,' for, if he had been a European, Mr. Castle would not have ventured to insult him in this way. But is not the position of a Joint-Magistrate superior to that of a Police Superintendent? We believe it is. So here we find the spectacle of a superior officer being insulted by an inferior one, simply because the colour of the latter is one shade whiter than the former. It should also be borne in mind that Kumar Girindra Narayan Deb Bahadur, the Joint-Magistrate, belongs to one of the highest aristocratic families in Bengal. And why was this foul epithet applied to him? Simply because he administered justice in the way he ought to have done, and expressed regret at the conduct of the prosecution, which every man who had a drop of humanity in him could not have helped doing. We submit that the natives of the country, holding important posts under Government, ought to be protected by the Viceroy and the ruler of the Province from these unwarrantable insults by European Police Superintendents.

"There is another phase of the question. The Government has never admitted the charge that the police interfere with the judicial work of the subordinate Magistrates. But here we see a District Police Superintendent not only calling a Magistrate in the position of Kumar Girindra Narayan a fool, but asking the District Magistrate to interfere with his judicial independence. Does not this prove conclusively that the subordinate Magistrates are intimidated by the police; and that, in order to secure pure and unadulterated justice, judicial and executive functions, now vested in the same official, should be separated? We would specially draw the attention of the Viceroy to this case, as the separation question is now under the consideration of His Excellency."

(b)—Working of the Courts.

BENGALUR,
1st Jan. 1902.

3. The *Bengalee* is sorry to note that the scheme for improving the Provincial Judicial Service has not been given effect to as yet, and is of opinion that unless prompt steps are taken to remedy the block in promotion, the efficiency of the Service will be impaired, as University men will not come forward for enrolment as munsifs if they cannot attain to the rank of first grade after a lifetime spent in the service of the Government.

(d)—Education.

BENGALUR,
31st Dec. 1901.

4. The *Bengalee* draws the attention of Government to the transfer of Maulvi Tabriz Ali, B.A., senior teacher of the Calcutta Madrassa, to Midnapore as Deputy Inspector of Schools, and says that he will be a distinct loss to that ancient institution of which he has been the life and soul.

It hopes that Mr. Pedlar will reconsider the appointment and not deprive the Madrassa of the Maulvi's services.

(e)—Municipal Administration and Local Self-Government.

BEHAR HERALD,
28th Dec. 1901.

5. The *Behar Herald* complains that owing to the action of Mr. McGregor, the public is put to considerable inconvenience for want of *tieca gharis*. Mr. McGregor, it is alleged, refuses to grant licenses in many cases simply because he does not approve of the height of the animals used.

The journal next complains that the appointment of *ex-sepoys* for the collection of municipal taxes, in the place of the old tahsildars, is giving dissatisfaction, on the ground that the men are *subburdust*.

(g)—Railways and Communications including Canals and Irrigation.

BENGALUR,
4th Jan. 1902.

6. The *Bengalee* wishes to know what action the Government has taken on the complaint of Dr. Banks, Superintendent of Emigration, on the overcrowding in railway carriages. It characterises the present condition of things as disgraceful, and remarks that in no other country would it be possible. It hopes that Indian public bodies will carry out its suggestion, and invite Mr. Robertson, the Railway Commissioner, to a Conference, and explain to him the grievances under which railway passengers labour.

(h)—General.

BENGALUR,
31st Dec. 1901.

7. The *Bengalee* complains that Mr. Geake, the Collector of Khulna, ordered eight of his clerks to attend office during the Christmas holidays, and wonders how "these Office Masters, whose particular delight it is to tyrannise over their subordinates, can play the autocrats with apparently nobody to stay their hands." It appeals to Sir John Woodburn to allow the poor clerks to enjoy the holidays which are legitimately theirs.

BENGALUR,
1st Jan. 1902.

8. The same journal learns that the Forest Officer of Chittagong recently asked the Mohant of Sitakund to submit his objections to the proposal to include the Sitakund forests within the Government forest limits. It trusts that nothing will be done to interfere with the immemorial rights and privileges of the people frequenting the shrine, who have held a sort of easement right to the forests. It is sure that no considerations of administrative expediency will induce Government to incorporate temple lands into the corpus of state property.

BENGALUR,
4th Jan. 1902.

9. The same paper reverts to the subject of the separation of the Executive and Judicial, and deplores the fact that although it is admitted that the present system is an anomaly which has no parallel in any other country governed according to civilised methods, yet every excuse is made to continue in the old groove.

Civilians were at first considered capable of showing in their person impossible combinations, but on this theory being exploded, the maintenance of prestige was brought forward as a reason for not separating the two functions. This has now given place to the question of economy, as India is found to be a very poor country and famine is chronic in the land.

But economising is done by granting compensation allowance to servants whose pay is already disproportionately large, spending fabulous sums on frontier defences against imaginary foes, adding to our burdens by annexing fresh territory in the interests of suffering humanity, maintaining a huge army for Imperial purposes, and such-like things.

To satisfy our conscience spasmodic crusades are undertaken against small chaprasis and in favour of bad paper and worse ink. Famine relief is also doled out with a niggardly hand for the sake of economy, and no reform, however urgent or necessary in the administration of criminal justice, is permitted for the same reason.

The District Magistrate seldom does much judicial work, his time being chiefly taken up with revenue matters, and for all practical purposes his decisions, if eliminated altogether, would not substantially affect the administration of justice. Even the Joint Magistrate in charge of the Sadar Division makes his judicial functions subordinate to executive needs. This can be avoided and things improved by that officer being placed directly under the Sessions Judge only.

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

10. Reverting to the protest raised against the threatened extinction of the Bhagalpur Landholders Association by the Bihar Association, the *Behar Herald* publishes a letter from a zamindar and member of the former

The two Landholders Associations in Bihar.

body, pointing out that in the opinion of many prominent members of his Association it is the question of co-operation and not amalgamation which should receive consideration.

The desire to be represented in the Bengal Council gave rise to the question of amalgamation. If the privilege is conferred, both associations will be asked to nominate a member between them, but after Sir John Woodburn's recent painful experience in Calcutta, it is unlikely that he will ever ask any private association to nominate a member.

BEHAR HERALD,
28th Dec. 1901.

11. The approaching coronation, says the *Hindoo Patriot*, affords a suitable opportunity of deciding the sea-voyage question finally. *Shastric* injunctions and the painful possibility of excommunication prevent orthodox Hindus from crossing the sea, and as it is only from orthodox Hindus of culture and position that a selection would be made to represent the Hindu community at King Edward's coronation, the Indian deputation must consequently be incomplete, and India will then not be adequately represented. The paper urges that the movement set on foot by Raja Binai Krishna to remove these difficulties should be revived, and a continuous agitation kept up until a satisfactory settlement is arrived at.

The approaching coronation and the sea-voyage question

HINDOO PATRIOT,
28th Dec. 1901.

12. The *Hindoo Patriot* shares Mr. Bonnerjee's opinion that the attitude of the Government towards the Indian National Congress is not unfavourable, and thinks that those who hold an opposite view on account of the silence Government has maintained in the matter have no reason for doing so, as the Government has never publicly recorded its contempt of the Congress. Besides, continues the *Patriot*, it has remained silent before on important public questions, which does not mean that a hostile view has been taken. The paper further points out that differences among the Congress leaders are damaging to the interests of the Congress and to the well-being of the people of this country as well.

The Government and the Congress.

HINDOO PATRIOT,
30th Dec. 1901.

13. The following is taken from the *Bengalee*:—
"How little India is held in the estimation of the authorities in England, has recently received a striking illustration in the unceremonious rejection of the proposal for the

A Final Court of Appeal.

BENGALIEE,
31st Dec. 1901.

establishment of a final court of appeal for dealing with cases sent up from India and the Colonies. The rejection of the proposal appears to have been due to the attitude of the Colonial Governments, who do not want a tribunal of the kind proposed; and such being the case, His Majesty's Government do not desire to take any further steps in the matter. Evidently in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, India is too negligible a quantity to be consulted, and whatever may be her views they must needs be sacrificed out of deference to Colonial sentiment. Now this is indeed adding insult to injury, as India is more interested in the matter than all the Colonies put together, more than half the cases which came up before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council being contributed by this country. It is true that India was represented at the Conference to which this question was referred for discussion by a delegate appointed by the Secretary of State, but he had apparently been assigned a subordinate part, while the decision of the question was virtually left to the Colonies. This country has, therefore, every reason to complain of the treatment it has received in connection with this matter. In the first place, it had no hand in the selection of its representative. In the second place, the representative selected by the Secretary of State had little voice in influencing the decision of the Conference. He knew that he was there on sufferance and he played his role to perfection by a simple process of self-effacement. Once more the Colonies were first and India nowhere!"

OFFICE OF THE INSPR.-GENERAL
OF POLICE, L. P.,
WRITERS' BUILDINGS,
The 4th January 1902.

H. B. ST. LEGER,
Asst. to the Insp.-General of Police, L. P.